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INFLATABLE HOOP/BASKET/GOAL

This application is a continuation of my provisional patent application No. 60/262,793, filing date Jan. 22, 2001.

The present invention relates to an inflatable Hoop/
Basket/Goal. Such structures may be used for a variety of
purposes but principally this structures proposed use is for a
recreational aid in the form of a goal or hoop that allows the
user to throw, shoot, or kick a ball or object through the goal
or hoop. The inflatable hoop/basket/goal can be used on any
surface, indoors or outdoors. The invention is portable and
being inflatable makes it easily assembled (Inflated) and
stored.

The present invention provides an inflatable tubular
framework comprising of inflatable tubular members. When
inflated the tubular uprights (Legs) joined by the arches that
are attached to the goal or hoop create a self supporting
structure. An internal bladder system gives the structure its
sturdiness. The inflatable tubular members can be made of
plastics or strong fabric. They can be welded, glued or sewn
together. The internal bladders can be made of plastics or
rubberised fabrics that will seal air tight. The netting may be
made of plastics or a yarn material.

Preferably, a plurality of anchorage points are provided
along each tubular member intended in use to be lowermost.
Anchorage points may also be provided on tubular members
intended in use to be lowermost. Anchorage points may also
be provided on tubular members intended to be at an upper
part of the structure in use and guylines may be attached at
these points in the form of ballasts.

Suitably, the framework structure may be provided in
association with means for anchoring or weighing down the
structure, such as weighted lines or pegs or stakes for driving
into the ground. Preferably means for weighing down the
structure are provided comprising a plurality of containers/
ballasts such as bags adapted to be filled in use with a
material such as sand or soil or with a liquid such as water.

Preferably, the anchorage points mentioned above may
be provided as protruding tabs of the material of the inflat-
able structure provided with reinforced holes therein for
receiving anchorage lines or ballasts.

It can be seen that the tubular frameworks illustrated can,
when deflated, be stored in a compact and convenient
manner and can conveniently be transported for use at the
beach or on picnics or in other recreational situations. They
may then be inflated by the use of a conventional foot pump
or other compressed gas source to provide in a very short
time a goal/hoop or basket for use in a game of basketball,
soccer, ect..

Whilst the invention has been described with reference to
specific characteristics of the embodiments illustrated, many
modifications and variations are possible within the scope of
the invention.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION**1. Field of Invention**

This invention relates to inflatable structures and is par-
ticularly directed to portable inflatable structures for indoor
and outdoor use as a sports goal, hoop, or basket.

2. Prior Art

In the past there have been numerous types of inflatable
objects, such as balloons, simulated furniture, and various
types of flotation devices. This invention is of an upright,
free standing, inflatable goal, hoop or basket. It is composed
of inflatable portions which are interconnected and include
four equally spaced legs. Each leg in turn is connected by an

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arched section. Each arched section is attached to the
circular hoop or goal creating one complete structure. A
mesh netting is attached to the interior circumference of the
circular hoop, hanging from the hoop or basket.

**OBJECTS AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE
INVENTION**

An object of the present invention is to provide an
inflatable sports goal which is strong and rigid when erected.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a free
standing, upright sports goal which is strong and rigid when
erected, yet which can quickly and easily be disassembled
for portability and storage.

An additional object of the present invention is to provide
a free standing, upright sports goal comprising an inflatable
framework, together with a casing formed of non-elastic
material, to form a sports goal which is strong and rigid
when erected, yet which can quickly and easily be disas-
sembled for portability or storage.

A specific object of the present invention is to provide a
free standing, upright sports goal structure having a plurality
of inflatable tubes joined to form the framework of a free
standing, upright goal structure, together with an outer
casing of non-elastic material which encloses the inflatable
framework and serves to form a strong rigid goal structure
which is useful in a plurality of sports that would include
basketball, soccer or any ball game played with the goal, yet
which can quickly and easily be erected or collapsed for
convenient transportation and storage, together with an
improved method of manufacturing the same.

These and other objects and features of the present
invention will be apparent from the following detailed
description, taken with reference to the figures of the accom-
panying drawing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a front view of a sports goal embodying the
present invention;

FIG. 2 is a cut out side view of the sports goal of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a top view of the sports goal of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is an isometric view showing the inflatable frame-
work for the sports goal of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is an isometric view of the sports goal of FIG. 1
showing the zippers for the insertion of the inflatable blad-
ders.

FIG. 6 is an isometric view of the sports goal showing the
inflation/deflation valve locations.

FIG. 7 is an isometric view of the sports goal of FIG. 1
showing the goal, free standing and upright ready for use.

FIG. 8 is a top view of the sports goal ready to receive a
ball (Any type) into the round goal area.

FIG. 9 is a side view of the free standing, upright goal
with a ball (Any type) approaching the hoop or goal area.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED
EMBODIMENT**

In that form of the present invention chosen for purposes
of illustration, FIGS. 4, 5, and 6 show a sports goal,
indicated generally at 10, having four vertical arches with
slanted legs 11, with each individual leg joining 12 equally
and laterally with the individual leg that corresponds to it
relative to the four points that create the square shape at the
base from the eight legs of the arches 11. The illustration of
FIG. 3 shows the top view of the sports goal as generally